

Rare Books

An Unknown Stevenson Item What the Dealers Are Doing Replies to Readers' Questions

A HITHERTO unknown Stevenson item turned up in the Red Cross sale held in London some weeks ago. Its title was *The Hanging Judge*, printed in Edinburgh for private circulation in 1887.

Bibliographers have only recorded the edition of this play privately printed by T. J. Wise, with an introduction by Edmund Gosse, in 1914. It appears that Stevenson wrote this play in 1887 and evidently had a few copies privately printed to be sent out to friends, inviting criticism.

The copy here noted was purchased by James P. Drake at the time of the sale, and was formerly the property of William Archer, the London dramatic critic, upon whose shelves it has remained all these years undiscovered and unknown. When it arrived in this country Stevenson collectors flocked to Mr. Drake's atelier to examine the find.

The sale of the famous Huth collection in London the early part of this month was a great success. Prices were very high, and American bidders failed to secure many of the rare things they sent bids for, one gentleman remarking to THE SUN reporter that out of forty-two items he had bid on, he only was able to get fourteen.

Catalogues Received.

Alexander M. Brown, 5 Beekman street. Clearance catalogue of books in all branches of literature, 1148 items. A decidedly good lot of interesting books priced at moving figures.

P. F. Madigan, No. 79 of his Bulletin of Autograph Letters, containing 86 items, of which a fine letter of Patrick Henry to Richard Henry Lee; a good letter of J. H. Ingram about Poe's *Karen*; and a letter of John Boyle O'Reilly to Paul Hamilton Hayne are the ones of greatest interest.

Personal Notes.

W. H. Keelson, well known to the local book trade as an expert cataloguer, died last Monday. He had been in the employ of George D. Smith for several years, and was recognized as one of the best posted men in the city.

Adolph Stager is in Washington and Baltimore inspecting an important library of Americana with a view to its purchase.

Powner's book shop in Chicago has lost its former manager, H. W. Howes, who is now a soldier with the army in France.

James F. Drake, Jr., is enjoying a vacation in the Berkshires, travelling in his car, accompanied by Mrs. Drake.

Replies to Questions.

D. M. O., Hollis, L. I.—Single numbers of old newspapers are seldom worth much. The Baltimore and Boston papers you have are worth about \$1 each. If the copy of THE SUN, vol. I, No. 1, is an original and not one of the reprints made a few years ago, it should be worth about \$3; it would be worth more if you could find some one who needed it to complete a file of the paper. The *Harper's Weeklies* are worth about \$2 per volume.

G. T. K., New York—Book collectors usually hold uncut books in higher estimation than those which have been cut, largely because the book is thus in the condition it left the press. In the book trade, a book whose top and front edges have never been separated is usually spoken of as being uncut and unopened, so that a book that has had these edges separated may still be classed as uncut. Unfortunately the book binder is need much to blame for the mutilation of books when he is permitted to trim the edges, when he often cuts so close as to destroy portions of the text and thus renders the book imperfect.

As a rule few collectors read the books they buy. Mr. Huntington, for example, could not read more than a very small portion of his books, even though he lived 500 years. No doubt, as you say, collectors should read what they buy, but as you will see, that is only possible to those who have very small collections.

We do not locate *Old Fogy*, by Hunker. It has not appeared in the regular issue of his books and is very likely a magazine article, information about which may be had at the Public Library.

J. T. M., Newark, N. J.—It is pretty certain that Charles Dressel of your city can supply what you want.

G. K. L., New York—There are so many things that enter into the making of value in old portraits that only an expert knows. If you think you have a Washington that is unknown and desire to ascertain the facts in relation to it there are two gentlemen in New York that can give you all information and upon whose judgment you may rely—Robert Fridenburg of Fifty-sixth street near Sixth avenue, and Joseph F. Sablin.

Miss K. L. R., Millville, N. J.—Old almanacs are sought for by a number of private

collectors and public libraries. If you will send THE SUN a list of what you have and will state what you expect of them it is possible you may be put in the way of disposing of them.

R. O., New York—The original edition of Dunlap's *History of the Arts of Design in the United States*, has long been out of print and has sold in recent times for as much as \$30 for the set of two volumes. It is practically unobtainable now. However, a new edition largely extended and published in three volumes, will soon be put upon the market by C. S. Goodspeed & Co., of Boston, with numerous illustrations of artists and their work. As no advance copy has yet been received by THE SUN no fuller description can be given you.

M. B. L., Richmond, S. I.—Your pamphlets are very interesting and some of them quite valuable. The list has been handed to a dealer who will communicate with you.

"The Poets of Modern France"

DR. LUDWIG LEWISOHN is one of the few critics in America whose acquaintance with the modern literatures of at least three countries is such as to lend a certain authority to his words. To his two splendid little books—one on the modern drama and one on modern German literature—he has just added *The Poets of Modern France*.

About one-third of the volume is devoted to a well written introduction on the poetry of some thirty modern French poets. In order to initiate the reader into the Symbolic School Dr. Lewisoohn begins with Baudelaire and Verlaine, the fore-runners of Symbolism. There are especially illuminating passages on Emile Verhaeren and Henri de Regnier.

The introduction, with all its compact information, would scarcely be complete without examples from the poems themselves, so that Dr. Lewisoohn has added translations of no less than sixty representative lyrics.

No one acquainted with the supersubtle cadences of say Verlaine can realize the difficulty of adequately interpreting—translation alone is insufficient—his poems. Take the following lines, the conclusion of *My Familiar Dream*. Is there not an echo of the original in them?

Her eyes are with a marble calmness filled,
And her grave voice holds the faint echo of
The cadence of dear voices that are stilled.

The technical dexterity of Edmond Rostand is the despair of translators. Dr. Lewisoohn has succeeded in bringing over into English the delicate strains of *The Drummer*, which opens as follows:

Early before the unseen cricket choir
Beats its small cymbal, twangs its little lyre,
When rosy green the dawning sky's un-
blurred.

Over the white road of the mountain fair,
Wandereth slowly, playing an olden air,
The drummer, handsome as an antique herd.

THE POETS OF MODERN FRANCE. By
LUDWIG LEWISOHN. B. W. Huebsch. \$1.50.

Three New Guide Books

THE closing of Europe to all American tourists except those who are exploring No Man's Land with bayonets instead of Baedekers has resulted in a flow from the presses of guide books to our own not very well known but popular land.

Americans who miss the Alps may be consoled with *A Guide to the White Mountains*, published by the Houghton Mifflin Company at \$2.75. This is a new edition of M. F. Sweetser's famous guide book, revised by John Nelson and members of the Appalachian Mountain Club. It has nearly 400 pages of text and plates, but it fits the pocket. It will be welcome to White Mountain lovers whose desire for detailed information is not satisfied by the motor guides.

McBride & Co. have issued, at \$1.25, *A Guide to the National Parks of America*, compiled and edited by Edward Frank Allen, editor of *Travel*. It is a book of 335 pages, pocket size, and includes maps of Yellowstone, Glacier, Yosemite and Mount Rainier parks. There are descriptions of a dozen other parks and the Grand Cañon.

Finding the Worth While in the Southwest, also issued by McBride at \$1.25, is the work of Charles Francis Saunders. He who wishes to beard the Navajo in his blanket store or peer into the pueblos of the Rio Grande would do well to carry this small green volume.

The Auction Season of 1917-18

Some Memorable Sales Statistics of Auction Rooms About \$2,000,000 of Books Sold

THE book auction business in the United States has perils has been proved more than once, but the season which ended some weeks ago was one of the most successful ever known.

Consignments of material were plentiful, prices were high enough to suit those who sold, and the returns in the way of compensation to those who conducted the sales were entirely satisfactory.

In recent years the quality of the offerings has been good, sales have been more frequent and prices have been thought to have reached the top, but books could then be bought at figures we should now look upon as being very moderate. No season has brought us the high quality of material of that just ended.

The whole field of literature was covered in 1917-18 in a way not seen before, some of the great things appearing in quantities unknown to former times; and at pretty nearly every sale the attendance has been large, representing buyers from all over the world. The war made little or no difference to those who wished to add to their collections, and the fact that one firm sold nearly \$1,000,000 worth of books is sufficient evidence that the buyers were not few, and knew rare items when they saw them.

Heightened Prices.

Prices have many times been spoken of as being abnormally high. The answer, "Where will you find another copy if you don't take this one?" was usually conclusive. It is to this consideration and to active competition that such prices are traceable. Those who want the books were willing to pay the prices established, and we are therefore compelled to accept them as being what such material was worth.

Not often does a season bring out such collections as have just been dispersed. The Huntington duplicates must be considered as forming the greatest lots offered—with one possible exception. These rarities afforded collectors and dealers opportunities the like of which none had ever known in this country hitherto. Some of the dealers paid many, many times the price they had sold the selfsame item to Mr. Huntington for. His purchase of a number of great collections in England and this country had given him many duplicates, and it was those he did not desire to keep that formed the four sales that were held in his name since December 10.

Another lot that attracted those interested in books was the Hagen collection, by many considered the finest sale of English literature ever held in America and surpassed by few on the other side. As Mr. Huntington did not have many of the Hagen books he was an active competitor at the sale, through George D. Smith, and added many of the finest items to his other treasures.

English Literature Ruled.

The one outstanding fact of the season is that it was one in which English literature held sway above everything else. There were a number of important Americana sales in this and other cities, but apart from the Huntington Americana and perhaps the Caplin lot there was not much to call out buyers except occasional items in mixed sales.

But offerings of Shakespeare, Dryden, Milton and other of the earlier writers; Keats, Shelley, Byron and other of the later ones, were by far the largest in number and rarity. Many items that appeared in auction catalogues unnoticed, selling for prices less than \$1, have been sold since the first of the year for amazing sums because they were properly placed. It has long been an axiom of the auction houses that a few good items in a sale will not pull up the junk; and it is much more likely the junk will pull down the value of the good ones.

Sold \$2,000,000 of Books.

Many interesting sales have been held in Boston, New York and Philadelphia, some of which have run well into the thousands of dollars. It is regretted that the request of THE SUN to the various concerns to be supplied with information has not in all cases been complied with so that a total

value of all auction purchases might be given. In estimating this amount only approximate figures can be given. From the replies received it would appear that about \$2,000,000 worth of books were sold the country over.

Went to Private Collections.

A very considerable part of what was sold went into private collections which will never be dispersed, finding a final resting place in the libraries of institutions or in public libraries and never again appearing at the auction block. Few of our present day collectors have the feeling that actuated Edmond de Goncourt, who provided in his will, "My wish is that my drawings, my prints, my curiosities, my books—in a word, these things of art which have been the joy of my life—shall not be consigned to the cold tomb of a museum and subjected to the stupid glance of the careless passerby; but I require that they shall be dispersed under the hammer of the auctioneer, so that the pleasure which the acquirement of each one of them has given me shall be given again in each case to some inheritor of my own tastes."

Places of Sale.

The rooms in which sales were held were: C. F. Libbie & Co., Boston; Anderson Galleries, American Art Association, Scott & O'Shaughnessy, the Walpole Galleries, New York, and Stan. V. Henkels, Philadelphia. Sales have been held in other places at various times, but as these places are not regularly engaged in selling such material as comes within the scope of this department no account has been taken of their results, and this is also true of certain places which purport to be auction concerns whose methods are not recognized by buyers generally.

As a whole, the season past leads to one conclusion: good books will always sell, the limit of their value being measured solely by the desire of buyers to own them. One hears frequently the statement that there are no more great collections to come on the market; that scouts who go out searching for rare items report their inability to find anything worth while, or that those they meet decline to sell. However this may be, it is yet a fact that each season sees one or more important sales in which collectors and dealers in all specialties find what they want. There are many old libraries in this country that have never been touched, and there always comes a time when these pass into hands that place little value upon them. Then they come on the market.

Facts and Figures.

The Anderson Galleries report that their season opened December 10, 1917, since which time they have held fifty sales. The returns from book sales were \$777,782.65; from letters, \$44,621.70; from prints, \$39,212.35 and from miscellaneous sales, which included objects of art, paintings, &c., \$171,218.50. Their notable sales were: The Huntington, parts 4-8; the Hagen; the Groves; Robinson; Shakespeariana, and the Crimmins. The season closed on June 3, and will reopen October 1.

The American Art Association report: Season opened November 16; number of sales, 13; returns from book sales, \$118,359.25; notable sales, Nuggets of American History; Roberts's Quakeriana; Brady Library; Haywood first editions; Hutchinson Heirlooms; Bergen books and papers. Season closed April 30; will reopen at the end of October. No figures are given for letters or prints.

Prospects for 1918-19.

For the season of 1918-19 it is said that an abundance of high class material is offered in all lines, and that there will be many interesting sales. The auction houses may be relied upon to find and secure many choice lots, and the settlement of estates will furnish a fruitful source of supply, to say nothing of other regular sources. To those who have material to dispose of it may be suggested that there is no better time to sell than when money is plenty and new collectors are coming into the field, ready to pay any price they may have to in order to secure what they want.

making tents and getting ready for the summer again.

Every young girl who wants to know how to enjoy city life in the best way should read how to do it here, and if she has any intention of joining Woodcraft she may learn all about those important forms and symbols which go toward making one a good member.

WOODCRAFT GIRLS IN THE CITY. By LILLIAN ELIZABETH ROY. George H. Doran Company. \$1.25.

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